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Message Text

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41
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13

ACDA-07 OES-06 OMB-01 SAB-01 DLOS-06 EB-07 SAL-01

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R 272034Z JUL 76
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4100
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY PANAMA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, PN, PQ, CO, VE
SUBJECT: MEETING OF LOPEZ, PEREZ, AND TORRIJOS JULY 23
ON COLOMBIAN-VENEZUELAN BORDER

REF: BOGOTA A-51; BOGOTA 7453 (BOTH NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. PRESIDENTS LOPEZ MICHELSON, CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ, AND PANAMANIAN GEN. OMAR TORRIJOS MET ABOARD THE DREDGE "CARABOBO" ON THE ARAUCA RIVER ON THE COLOMBIAN-VENEZUELAN BORDER JULY 23. MEETING SERVED UP NO SURPRISES. THE THREE LEADERS CONDEMNED COLONIALISM AND CALLED FOR EQUALITY IN ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN DCS AND LDCS AND THE THREE AGREED TO PROCEED WITH PROMPT DEMARCATION OF MARINE AND SUBMARINE AREAS. LOPEZ AND PEREZ EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR PANAMA ON THE CANAL ISSUE, SPECIFICALLY REFERRING TO "SLOWNESS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS" BUT ALSO TO THEIR EXPECTATION THAT THESE WILL LEAD TO PANAMA'S RECOVERY OF ITS SOVEREIGNTY. LATTER TWO REAFFIRMED SUPPORT FOR ANDEAN PACT. BILATERALLY, PEREZ AND LOPEZ REVIEWED BORDER PROBLEMS. LOPEZ AND TORRIJOS SUPPORTED THE VENEZUELAN POSITION WITH REGARD TO "INEXACT AND TENDENTIOUS" NEWS WHICH "TRANSNATIONAL
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NEWS AGENCIES" PRODUCE ABOUT LATIN AMERICA. VISIT ALSO SERVED

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TO DEMONSTRATE GOV WILLINGNESS TO WORK WITH COLOMBIA
ON DIFFICULT BORDER ISSUES, BUT WITHOUT CONCEDING ANY PREVIOUS
VENEZUELAN CLAIMS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE THREE POLITICAL LEADERS ISSUED A JOINT COMMUNIQUE
FOLLOWING THEIR SIX-HOUR MEETING ABOARD A DREDGE ON THE ARAUCA
RIVER ON THE DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN VENEZUELA AND COLOMBIA.
THE THREEE LEADERS REAFFIRMED THEIR DETERMINATION TO PROCEED
WITH DEMARCATION OF THEIR MARINE AND SUBMARINE AREAS. THEY
CONDEMNED THE REMNANTS OF COLONIALISM, EXPRESSED AGREEMENT
ON THE NEED TO PLACE ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE DCS AND
LDCS ON A PLACE OF EQUALITY AND OF COOPERATION "IN THE ESTABLISH-
MENT OF A SYSTEM OF NONRECIPROCAL COMMERCIAL PREFERENCES ON
A GLOBAL OR HEMISPHERIC SCALE," AND THEIR SOLIDARITY WITH THE
LATIN AMERICAN POSITIONS AT THE PARIS AND NAIROBI CONFERENCES.

3. LOPEZ AND PEREZ REAFFIRMED THEIR CONTINUING SUPPORT
FOR PANAMA ON THE CANAL ISSUE AND SPECIFICALLY THEIR CONCERN
OVER THE SLOWNESS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN PANAMA AND THE
UNITED STATES. FURTHER, THE COMMUNIQUE NOTED THAT THEY HAD
CONFIDENCE THAT THESE NEGOTIATIONS WILL SOON CULMINATE IN
PANAMA'S COMPLETE RECOVERY OF ITS SOVEREIGNTY OVER ITS
TERRITORY. BOTH ALSO REAFFIRMED THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE ANDEAN
PACT.

4. LOPEZ AND TORRIJOS, FOR THEIR PART, SUPPORTED VENEZUELA'S
POSITION ON CONTROL OF NORMS OF COMMUNICATION WHICH "DO NOT
THREATEN THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS BUT DO PROTECT VALUES AND
CULTURAL IDENTITY OF LATIN AMERICA."

5. REGARDING COMMON BORDER PROBLEMS, PEREZ AND LOPEZ
COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO A SERIES OF GENERAL STEPS, INTER ALIA:
A) ARAUCA RIVER BASIN - TO DEFINE ARAUCA BORDERS ACCORDING
TO INTERNATIONAL NORMS, THAT IS, "BY AN UNINTERRUPTED LINE OF
THE DEEPEST SOUNDING. THEY ALSO RECOGNIZED ARAUCA RIVER
HAS OVER THE YEARS CHANGED COURSE AND THAT SEVERAL ISLANDS
IN THE RIVER HAVE DISAPPEARED AND OTHERS HAVE FORMED, "ALL OF
WHICH PRESENTS A PICTURE OF COMPLEX PROBLEMS." ACCORDINGLY,
THEY AGREED TO DEMARCATE THE ARAUCA RIVER IN ITS INTERNATIONAL
CHANNEL ACCORDING TO TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS IN FORCE,
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WORKING THROUGH THE MIXED DEMARCATION COMMISSION WHICH WILL
BEGIN WORK ON SEPTEMBER 15. EXPENSES INCURRED IN THIS ENDEAVOR
WILL BE DIVIDED EQUALLY AND A BINATIONAL COMPANY WILL BE
ESTABLISHED TO OPERATE TWO DREDGES, ONE FROM EACH COUNTRY.
THEY ALSO AGREED TO CREATE A BINATIONAL WORKING TEAM TO
EXCHANGE INFORMATION ON THE ARAUCA RIVER BASIN.
B) OTHER RIVER BASINS - FURTHER, THEY ALSO AGREED TO CARRY OUT
ACTIVITIES, THROUGH A MIXED COMMISSION, FOR DEVELOPMENT

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OF THE HYDROGRAPHIC BASINS LYING BETWEEN VENEZUELA AND COLOMBIA INVOLVING TE FULVIA, CATATUMBO, METZ, ARAUCA AND UPPER ORINOCO RIVERS. THEY ALSO AGREED TO DEMARCATE, RECONSTRUCT AND INCREASE THE NUMBER OF BORDER MARKERS ON LAND BORDERS.
C) MIGRATIONPROBLEM - TWO PRESIDENTS ALSO REFERRED TO "SITUATIONS WHICH HAVE OCCURED AS ARESULT OF BORDER MIGRATIONS" AND AGREED TO APPOINT WORKING GROUPS TO STUDY THE CREATION OF A MIXED COMMISSION TO WORK ON MIGRATION AND RELATED MATTERS, INCLUDING LEGAL, LABOR, AGRICULTURAL, SANITATION, FORESTRY AND POLICE PROBLEMS THAT OCCUR AS A RESULT OF SUCH MIGRATION.

6. COMMENT: FROM THE VENEZUELAN POINT OF VIEW, THE VISIT MUST BE CONSIDERED A SUCCESS. ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, PEREZ REITERATED THE GOV'S SUPPORT FOR STANDARD THIRD WORLD THEMES, INCLUDING PASSING REFERENCES TO CIEC, UNCTAD, AND GSP ARRANGEMENTS. PEREZ ALSO GAVE SUPPORT TO PANAMA ON THE CANAL ISSUE, BUT THE LANGUAGE WAS LESS STRIDENT THAN SOME OF HIS EARLIER PRONOUNCEMENTS AND IN FACT, IN PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING MEETING, PEREZ NOTED THAT PROGRESS WOULD ONLY COME ONCE U.S. ELECTIONS ARE OUT OF THE WAY. ON BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH COLOMBIA, THE LONG COMMUNIQUE SPELLS OUT VARIOUS STEPS WHICH BOTH SIDES MAY TAKE TO WORK OUT PROBLEMS INVOLVING DEMARCATION OF RIVER BOUNDARIES, AND IMMIGRATION PROBLEMS, BUT NOT THE LONG-STANDING GULF OF VENEZUELA OFFSHORE BOUNDARY DISPUTE. THE LATTER ISSUE, THE THORNIEST OF ALL, RECEIVED ONLY GENERAL SUPPORT, AND NO REFERENCE WAS MADE TO A SPECIFIC TIMETABLE FOR FURTHER WORK ON THIS ISSUE. NEITHER WAS IT MADE CLEAR HOW THE GOV WILL FULFILL ITS GENERAL COMMITMENT TO REACH PROMPT DEMARCATION OF MARINE AND SUBMARINE AREAS. THUS, WHETHER THE GOV WILL DO MORE THAN STUDY ANY OF THESE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS REMAINS
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PROBLEMATIC, NOTWITHSTANDING THE COMMON FRIENDSHIP OF THE TWO PRESIDENTS, AND BOTH COUNTRIES' DEMOCRATIC HERITAGE, WHICH, INCIDENTALLY, RECEIVED NO MENTION, POSSIBLY BECAUSE OF THE PRESENCE OF GEN. TORRIJOS.
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